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Trial may spill some tasty beans



Maj. Gen. Richard B. Collins. Richard B. Collins, 53, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is accused of funneling the money from secret military accounts into his Swiss bank accounts before his retirement in 1978.

Collins says classified documents and other secret information will show that he wasn't stealing the money, but was carrying out his assignment as manager of funds used to bankroll CIA and military intelligence operations in Europe.

Prosecutors and defense attorneys said that a sealed order issued by United States District Judge James C. Paine allows Collins to bring out mili-

tary secrets in a trial to begin in West Palm Beach, Fla., July 18.

MICHAEL PASANO, a federal prosecutor in the case, said earlier, the "government is given the choice of making the information public or letting the case die and preserving the secrecy of the information."

Said defense attorney Stephen J. Bronis: "We now have the ability to defend the case."

John Russell, the Justice Department spokesman, said: "We're definitely going to trial in the case."

Paine reviewed the classified evidence in Collins' case last week during a closed hearing. "The judge ruled that it is relevant and material and necessary for the defense to use it," Bronis said.

Bronis said the list of potential witnesses includes former Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr., who was at one time Collins' commander in Europe.

Almost all of the pretrial proceedings in Collins' case have been closed to keep the classified information secret.